City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN REVIEW

INITIAL EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

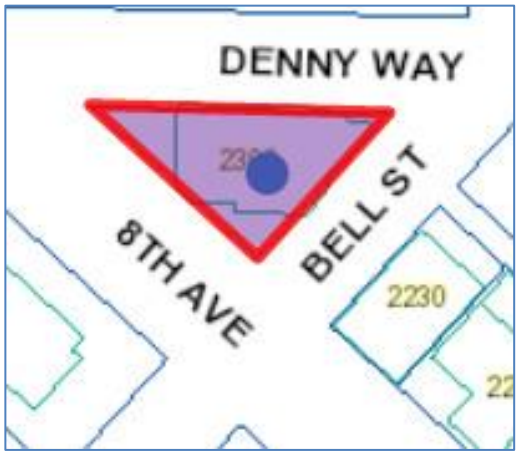
Project Number:	3025536
Address:	2300 8th Avenue
Applicant:	Charles Wallace, Caron Architecture
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, January 03, 2017
Board Members Present:	Anjali Grant (Chair) Bradley Calvert JP Emery Grace Leong
Board Members Absent:	Murphy McCullough
SDCI Staff Present:	Lindsay King

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Downtown Mixed Commercial DMC 240/290-400

Nearby Zones:	(North)	SM-SLU 240/125-400
	(South)	DMC 240/290-400
	(East)	DMC 240/290-400
	(West)	DMC 240/290-400

Lot Area: 9,878 sq. ft.



Current Development:

One story commercial structure.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The subject site is located on a triangular block bound by Denny Way to the north, 8th Avenue to the west and Bell Street to the east. The subject lot and lots to the south, east and west are zoned Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC 240/290-400). Lots directly north are zoned Seattle Mixed South Lake Union (SM-SLU 240/125-400). The site contains one parcel with an existing early 20th-century commercial structure. To the north, within the South Lake Union Urban Center, is Denny Park, the oldest City of Seattle park. Denny Park is currently closed for renovations. To the west is a four-story hotel structure. To the east is a new office building with ground level retail. The site contains a slope of approximately 14 feet of grade change from the high point of the site in the northwest corner to the low point of the site in the northeast corner.

The surrounding development includes sites recently redeveloped or proposed for development. The Denny Triangle area is transitioning from low and mid rise commercial buildings to residential towers, office development, and hotel uses. Newer development is contemporary in design, with simple forms, large areas of glazing, and permanent materials such as precast concrete. Older development is a mix of building types, ranging from early 20th century masonry and wood frame construction to 1970's auto-oriented buildings with large surface parking lots.

Bell Street is a designated Green Street that functions as a connector between 9th Avenue north of Denny to the Downtown Street grid. Bell Street is a City of Seattle Park between 5th Avenue and 1st Avenue. 8th Avenue is a minor arterial street and Class II Pedestrian Street. 8th Avenue dead ends at Denny Way but continues from the site into the Downtown street grid. Denny is principal arterial dividing the Denny Triangle from the South Lake Union Neighborhoods. Denny also provides the connection between Downtown and I-5. Virginia Street is a minor arterial street. Frequent bus transit serves the area.

Access:

Access can be provided from 8th Avenue, Bell Street, and Denny Way.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

No Environmentally Critical Areas have been identified on site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance for a 36 story, 330-unit apartment building with ground floor retail. Parking for 75 vehicles will be located below grade. Existing structure will be demolished.

The design packet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website: http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCI:

Mailing Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE January 3, 2017

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Expressed concerns regarding the loss of views from adjacent residential units.
- Supported the design concept but noted that the perspective drawings in the EDG packet exclude new buildings, building under construction and those in the permitting process.
- Would like to see the Design Review Board assess the massing impacts to light, glare, and wind.
- Expressed appreciation for the developers outreach to the South Lake Union Community Council. Noted that Option 2 and 3 are the most interesting, as they provide an additional 7' foot ground level setback along Bell Street.
- Expressed appreciation for the large plazas proposed at each corner. Would like to see additional information regarding the art proposal at each intersection.
- Would like more information regarding the vertical clearance of the 7-foot setback along Bell Street.
- Expressed support for Option 2 over Option 3, noted the modulation and reveals are better expressed in Option 2.
- Expressed concern regarding the blank wall along Denny. Noted the wall should include an appropriate, contextual treatment, which may include a green wall.
- Expressed concern regarding the bike lane landscaping. Would like to see a treatment that works better than the other examples in the City.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

1. **Architectural Concept.** The Board discussed the merits of each design option. Option 1 best responds to the geometry of the site, while Options 2 and 3 include recesses that break up the mass of the structure. Ultimately, the Board expressed support for the 'Abraded' tower design as represented on page 68 of the EDG packet. While the Board supported the concept, the Board also noted that the concept was not well expressed in the proposed tower massing and provided the following guidance.
   a) Develop the tower and podium massing to articulate the stated design concept more clearly: "natural forces weathering a singular stone plinth".
      i) Revise the massing to be more representative of the design sketches provided on page 68 of the EDG packet (A2, B4).
      ii) The building articulation should be non-rational, and less regular, consistent with the natural force erosions and fissures. For example, water would create a smooth façade but that there would be a trailing edge to wind forces, the corner of the building would be a form other than a perfect semi-circle (A2, B4).
      iii) The form of the structure, erosions, and material application should clearly express the design intent while also responding to the specific site's triangular geometry (A1, A2, B4).
      iv) Include modulation and recesses with sufficient depth to create a strong shadow lines to break up the mass of the structure. The Board was particularly concerned with the treatment of the large façade facing Denny Park (A2, B4).
      v) Integrate the roof and mechanical penthouse design into the overall architectural concept. Consider extending the roof form to the edge of the structure to create a slim and vertical form (A2.2, B4).
   b) The Board requested the revised building massing be contextualized within the recently constructed, under construction, permitted and in-review buildings in the immediate context (A1.1).

2. **Podium and Streetscape.** The Board was supportive of the ground level programing but was not supportive of the framed podium design shown on page 76 of the EDG packet. The Board felt the frames were contrary to the tower architectural concept. At the second Early Design Guidance Meeting the Board requested the following:
   a) Revise the podium design to better integrate into the tower architectural concept. The Board noted there are multiple ways to accomplish a more integrated podium design: page 68 provides two viable alternatives, continue tower erosions into the base or design a uniform datum (A2, B4).
   b) Provide a study of blank wall treatments for the Denny Way façade. The Board noted the treatment should be dynamic and respond to the park across the street. Blank wall treatments may include, but are not limited to, an opaque façade, art work or a green wall (C3, E3.1).

c) Demonstrate that the garage access is treated to minimize the presence along the façade (E2.2).
d) Provide more detail on the Green Street hill climb and the relationship to adjacent commercial uses and residential decks. Where possible, activate the hill climb with direct access to retail spaces (B3.3, C1, C4.1, D1.1, D1.2, D3.1).
e) Provide more detail on the treatment of the hill climb and the corner art plaza. Consider each as an interactive space that will be a continuous experience for pedestrians passing the site (B3.3, D1.1, D1.2, D3.1)
f) Develop building overhangs that clearly unify the base, create a strong design element, and minimize the downdraft of wind (C5.1).

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the **First** Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Tower Width (SMC 23.49.058 E2):** The Code requires a maximum tower width of 120' in the general North-South direction above 160' for residential use. The applicant proposes 125-foot tower width along the 8th Avenue façade.

   At the time the Early Design Guidance the Board indicated that additional information was necessary to understand whether the departure request better meets the intent of adopted design guidelines. The Board noted that the current proposal does not clearly articulate the stated design concept. As such, the Board felt that the expression of the design parti must include meaningful erosions to break down the scale of the structure, particularly on the large façade facing Denny Park. The Board was open to revisiting the departure request at the second EDG meeting with the guidance provided.

2. **Green Street Setback (SMC 23.49.058 G2):** The Code requires a 15-foot setback above 45 feet along designated Green Streets. The applicant proposes to reduce the Green Street setback to 7' along the entire façade facing Bell Street.

   At the time of the Early Design Guidance, the Board indicated that additional information was necessary to understand whether the departure request better meets the intent of adopted design guidelines. The Board requested additional information regarding the treatment and activation of the proposed Green Street hill climb. The Board was interested to understand how the space would interact with both ground level commercial spaces, upper level residential decks and the adjacent sidewalk. The hill climb should serve as terraces linking the two art plazas along each corner. The Board acknowledged that the partial setback at ground level would provide a substantial departure for the tower above. The Board noted that the expression of the design

concept in deep meaningful erosions would be integral to the justification of the green street departure.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Downtown design guidelines identified as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the Design Review website.

SITE PLANNING AND MASSING

A1 Respond to the Physical Environment: Develop an architectural concept and compose the building's massing in response to geographic conditions and patterns of urban form found nearby or beyond the immediate context of the building site.

A1.1. Response to Context: Each building site lies within a larger physical context having various and distinct features and characteristics to which the building design should respond. Develop an architectural concept and arrange the building mass in response to one or more of the following, if present:

a. a change in street grid alignment that yields a site having nonstandard shape;
b. a site having dramatic topography or contrasting edge conditions;
c. patterns of urban form, such as nearby buildings that have employed distinctive and effective massing compositions;
d. access to direct sunlight—seasonally or at times of day;
e. views from the site of noteworthy structures or natural features, (i.e.: the Space Needle, Smith Tower, port facilities, Puget Sound, Mount Rainier, the Olympic Mountains);
f. views of the site from other parts of the city or region; and
g. proximity to a regional transportation corridor (the monorail, light rail, freight rail, major arterial, state highway, ferry routes, bicycle trail, etc.).

A2 Enhance the Skyline: Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety in the downtown skyline. Respect existing landmarks while responding to the skyline's present and planned profile.

A2.1. Desired Architectural Treatments: Use one or more of the following architectural treatments to accomplish this goal:

a. sculpt or profile the facades;
b. specify and compose a palette of materials with distinctive texture, pattern, or color;
c. provide or enhance a specific architectural rooftop element.

A2.2. Rooftop Mechanical Equipment: In doing so, enclose and integrate any rooftop mechanical equipment into the design of the building as a whole.

ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

B1 Respond to the neighborhood context: Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.

B1.1. Adjacent Features and Networks: Each building site lies within an urban neighborhood context having distinct features and characteristics to which the building design should respond. Arrange the building mass in response to one or more of the following, if present:

a. a surrounding district of distinct and noteworthy character;
b. an adjacent landmark or noteworthy building;
c. a major public amenity or institution nearby;
d. neighboring buildings that have employed distinctive and effective massing compositions;
e. elements of the pedestrian network nearby, (i.e.: green street, hillclimb, mid-block crossing, through-block passageway); and
f. direct access to one or more components of the regional transportation system.

B1.2. Land Uses: Also, consider the design implications of the predominant land uses in the area surrounding the site.

B3 Reinforce the Positive Urban Form & Architectural Attributes of the Immediate Area.: Consider the predominant attributes of the immediate neighborhood and reinforce desirable siting patterns, massing arrangements, and streetscape characteristics of nearby development.

B3.1. Building Orientation: In general, orient the building entries and open space toward street intersections and toward street fronts with the highest pedestrian activity. Locate parking and vehicle access away from entries, open space, and street intersections considerations.

B3.3. Pedestrian Amenities at the Ground Level: Consider setting the building back slightly to create space adjacent to the sidewalk conducive to pedestrian-oriented activities such as vending, sitting, or dining. Reinforce the desirable streetscape elements found on adjacent blocks. Consider complementing existing:

h. public art installations,
i. street furniture and signage systems,
j. lighting and landscaping, and
k. overhead weather protection.

B4 Design a Well-Proportioned & Unified Building: Compose the massing and organize the interior and exterior spaces to create a well-proportioned building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole.

B4.1. Massing: When composing the massing, consider how the following can contribute to create a building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept:

a. setbacks, projections, and open space;
b. relative sizes and shapes of distinct building volumes; and
c. roof heights and forms.

B4.2. Coherent Interior/Exterior Design: When organizing the interior and exterior spaces and developing the architectural elements, consider how the following can contribute to create a building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept:

d. facade modulation and articulation;
e. windows and fenestration patterns;
f. corner features;
g. streetscape and open space fixtures;
h. building and garage entries; and
i. building base and top.

B4.3. Architectural Details: When designing the architectural details, consider how the following can contribute to create a building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept:

j. exterior finish materials;
k. architectural lighting and signage;
l. grilles, railings, and downspouts;
m. window and entry trim and moldings;
n. shadow patterns; and
o. exterior lighting.

THE STREETSCAPE

C1 Promote Pedestrian Interaction: Spaces for street level uses should be designed to engage pedestrians with the activities occurring within them. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe, welcoming, and open to the general public.

C1.1. Street Level Uses: Provide spaces for street level uses that:

a. reinforce existing retail concentrations;
b. vary in size, width, and depth;
c. enhance main pedestrian links between areas; and
d. establish new pedestrian activity where appropriate to meet area objectives. Design for uses that are accessible to the general public, open during established shopping hours, generate walk-in pedestrian clientele, and contribute to a high level of pedestrian activity.

C1.2. Retail Orientation: Where appropriate, consider configuring retail space to attract tenants with products or services that will "spill-out" onto the sidewalk (up to six feet where sidewalk is sufficiently wide).

C1.3. Street-Level Articulation for Pedestrian Activity: Consider setting portions of the building back slightly to create spaces conducive to pedestrian-oriented activities such as vending, resting, sitting, or dining. Further articulate the street level facade to provide an engaging pedestrian experience via:

e. open facades (i.e., arcades and shop fronts);
f. multiple building entries;
g. windows that encourage pedestrians to look into the building interior;
h. merchandising display windows;
i. street front open space that features art work, street furniture, and landscaping;

j. exterior finish materials having texture, pattern, lending themselves to high quality detailing.

C3 Provide Active — Not Blank — Facades: Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.

C3.1. Desirable Facade Elements: Facades which for unavoidable programmatic reasons may have few entries or windows should receive special design treatment to increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest. Enliven these facades by providing:

a. small retail spaces (as small as 50 square feet) for food bars, newstands, and other specialized retail tenants;
b. visibility into building interiors;
c. limited lengths of blank walls;
d. a landscaped or raised bed planted with vegetation that will grow up a vertical trellis or frame installed to obscure or screen the wall's blank surface;
e. high quality public art in the form of a mosaic, mural, decorative masonry pattern, sculpture, relief, etc., installed over a substantial portion of the blank wall surface;
f. small setbacks, indentations, or other architectural means of breaking up the wall surface;
g. different textures, colors, or materials that break up the wall's surface.
h. special lighting, a canopy, awning, horizontal trellis, or other pedestrian-oriented feature to reduce the expanse of the blank surface and add visual interest;
i. seating ledges or perches (especially on sunny facades and near bus stops);
j. merchandising display windows or regularly changing public information display cases.

C4 Reinforce Building Entries: To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce building entries.

C4.1. Entry Treatments: Reinforce the building's entry with one or more of the following architectural treatments:

a. extra-height lobby space;
b. distinctive doorways;
c. decorative lighting;
d. distinctive entry canopy;
e. projected or recessed entry bay;
f. building name and address integrated into the facade or sidewalk;
g. artwork integrated into the facade or sidewalk;
h. a change in paving material, texture, or color;
i. distinctive landscaping, including plants, water features and seating
j. ornamental glazing, railings, and balustrades.

C4.2. Residential Entries: To make a residential building more approachable and to create a sense of association among neighbors, entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street and easily accessible and inviting to pedestrians. The space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction

among residents and neighbors. Provide convenient and attractive access to the building's entry. To ensure comfort and security, entry areas and adjacent open space should be sufficiently lighted and protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

C5 Encourage Overhead Weather Protection: Project applicants are encouraged to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.

C5.1. Overhead Weather Protection Design Elements: Overhead weather protection should be designed with consideration given to:

a. the overall architectural concept of the building
b. uses occurring within the building (such as entries and retail spaces) or in the adjacent streetscape environment (such as bus stops and intersections);
c. minimizing gaps in coverage;
d. a drainage strategy that keeps rain water off the street-level facade and sidewalk;
e. continuity with weather protection provided on nearby buildings;
f. relationship to architectural features and elements on adjacent development, especially if abutting a building of historic or noteworthy character;
g. the scale of the space defined by the height and depth of the weather protection;
h. use of translucent or transparent covering material to maintain a pleasant sidewalk environment with plenty of natural light; and
i. when opaque material is used, the illumination of light-colored undersides to increase

PUBLIC AMENITIES

D1 Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space: Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.

D1.1. Pedestrian Enhancements: Where a commercial or mixed-use building is set back from the sidewalk, pedestrian enhancements should be considered in the resulting street frontage. Downtown the primary function of any open space between commercial buildings and the sidewalk is to provide access into the building and opportunities for outdoor activities such as vending, resting, sitting, or dining.

a. All open space elements should enhance a pedestrian oriented, urban environment that has the appearance of stability, quality, and safety.
b. Preferable open space locations are to the south and west of tower development, or where the siting of the open space would improve solar access to the sidewalk.
c. Orient public open space to receive the maximum direct sunlight possible, using trees, overhangs, and umbrellas to provide shade in the warmest months. Design such spaces to take advantage of views and solar access when available from the site.
d. The design of planters, landscaping, walls, and other street elements should allow visibility into and out of the open space.

D1.2. Open Space Features: Open spaces can feature art work, street furniture, and landscaping that invite customers or enhance the building's setting. Examples of desirable features to include are:

a. visual and pedestrian access (including barrier- free access) into the site from the public sidewalk;
b. walking surfaces of attractive pavers;
c. pedestrian-scaled site lighting;
d. retail spaces designed for uses that will comfortably "spill out" and enliven the open space;
e. areas for vendors in commercial areas;
f. landscaping that enhances the space and architecture;
g. pedestrian-scaled signage that identifies uses and shops; and
h. site furniture, art work, or amenities such as fountains, seating, and kiosks. residential open space

D2 Enhance the Building with Landscaping: Enhance the building and site with generous landscaping— which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.

D2.1. Landscape Enhancements: Landscape enhancement of the site may include some of the approaches or features listed below:

a. emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting;
b. include a special feature such as a courtyard, fountain, or pool;
c. incorporate a planter guard or low planter wall as part of the architecture;
d. distinctively landscape open areas created by building modulation;
e. soften the building by screening blank walls, terracing retaining walls, etc;
f. increase privacy and security through screening and/or shading;
g. provide a framework such as a trellis or arbor for plants to grow on;
h. incorporate upper story planter boxes or roof planters;
i. provide identity and reinforce a desired feeling of intimacy and quiet;
j. provide brackets for hanging planters;
k. consider how the space will be viewed from the upper floors of nearby buildings as well as from the sidewalk; and
l. if on a designated Green Street, coordinate improvements with the local Green Street plan.

D3 Provide Elements That Define the Place: Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable "sense of place" associated with the building.

D3.1. Public Space Features and Amenities: Incorporate one or more of the following a appropriate:

a. public art;
b. street furniture, such as seating, newspaper boxes, and information kiosks;

c. distinctive landscaping, such as specimen trees and water features;
d. retail kiosks;
e. public restroom facilities with directional signs in a location easily accessible to all; and
f. public seating areas in the form of ledges, broad stairs, planters and the like, especially near public open spaces, bus stops, vending areas, on sunny facades, and other places where people are likely to want to pause or wait.

D3.2. Intersection Focus: Enliven intersections by treating the corner of the building or sidewalk with public art and other elements that promote interaction (entry, tree, seating, etc.) and reinforce the distinctive character of the surrounding area.

D6 Design for Personal Safety & Security: Design the building and site to promote the feeling of personal safety and security in the immediate area.

D6.1. Safety in Design Features: To help promote safety for the residents, workers, shoppers, and visitors who enter the area:

a. provide adequate lighting;
b. retain clear lines of sight into and out of entries and open spaces;
c. use semi-transparent security screening, rather than opaque walls, where appropriate;
d. avoid blank and windowless walls that attract graffiti and that do not permit residents or workers to observe the street;
e. use landscaping that maintains visibility, such as short shrubs and/or trees pruned so that all branches are above head height;
f. use ornamental grille as fencing or over ground-floor windows in some locations;
g. avoid architectural features that provide hiding places for criminal activity;
h. design parking areas to allow natural surveillance by maintaining clear lines of sight for those who park there, for pedestrians passing by, and for occupants of nearby buildings;
i. install clear directional signage;
j. encourage “eyes on the street” through the placement of windows, balconies, and street-level uses; and
k. ensure natural surveillance of children’s play areas.

VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PARKING

E2 Integrate Parking Facilities: Minimize the visual impact of parking by integrating parking facilities with surrounding development. Incorporate architectural treatments or suitable landscaping to provide for the safety and comfort of people using the facility as well as those walking by.

E2.2. Parking Structure Entrances: Design vehicular entries to parking structure so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building. Subordinate the garage entrance to the pedestrian entrance in terms of size, prominence on the street-scape, location, and design emphasis. Consider one or more of the following design strategies:

i. Enhance the pedestrian entry to reduce the relative importance of the garage entry.

j. Recess the garage entry portion of the facade or extend portions of the structure over the garage entry to help conceal it.
k. Emphasize other facade elements to reduce the visual prominence of the garage entry.
l. Use landscaping or artwork to soften the appearance of the garage entry from the street.
m. Locate the garage entry where the topography of the site can help conceal it.

E3 Minimize the Presence of Service Areas: Locate service areas for trash dumpsters, loading docks, mechanical equipment, and the like away from the street front where possible. Screen from view those elements which for programmatic reasons cannot be located away from the street front.

E3.1. Methods of Integrating Service Areas: Consider incorporating one or more of the following to help minimize these impacts:

a. Plan service areas for less visible locations on the site, such as off the alley.
b. Screen service areas to be less visible.
c. Use durable screening materials that complement the building.
d. Incorporate landscaping to make the screen more effective.
e. Locate the opening to the service area away from the sidewalk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the First Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided.